

Mr. Timothy J. Johnson, Minnetonka, Minnesota.

There was no objection.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, March 21, 2001.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the provisions of 44 U.S.C. 2702, I hereby reappoint as a member of the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress the following person: Susan Palmer, Aurora, Illinois.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

JEFF TRANDAH, *Clerk.*

TORNADO SHELTERS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 93 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 247.

□ 1224

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 247) to amend the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 to authorize communities to use community development block grant funds for construction of tornado-safe shelters in manufactured home parks, with Mr. MILLER of Florida in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered as having been read the first time.

Under the rule, the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. ROUKEMA) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. ROUKEMA).

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, as Chair of the subcommittee, I appreciate this opportunity to express my support for H.R. 247, the Tornado Shelters Act. It was introduced by the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS), our colleague.

This legislation would permit the use of Community Development Block Grant funds to construct or enhance tornado shelters in manufactured housing communities or for the residents of manufactured housing.

Mr. Chairman, I will shortly turn the floor over to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS), our colleague, so that he may manage the bill, but, before I do, I want to make a few points.

I do not hail from an area of the country that frequently suffers outbreaks of tornados. While we have regular bouts of severe weather, especially during the summer months, we are far from "tornado alley", but we certainly appreciate and understand that this is a national problem.

As many of my colleagues know, however, the tornado season just started last week and will continue through June for many parts of the country.

I want to stress this, Mr. Chairman, this is truly a matter of life or death. We have heard over and over again some of the statistics about the numbers of people who have died year after year in tornados. In fact, already this year 10 people have died from tornados, and last year there were over 40 fatalities.

So we will continue going on, and I am sure the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS) and others will document the need, but I want to point out that these are killer storms and repeat this issue is a matter of life or death.

As the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS) says, in the face of the tornado threat, we can do two things. I like the way he said this. We can pray and prepare. Pray that it will not happen again, and prepare for the next line of twisters.

That is why we are here today. We are expediting the process of responsible congressional action. While the citizens can pray, our responsibility as their governmental officials must be to help all prepare.

Mr. Chairman, I understand that there are different questions of interpretation on whether the legislation is needed or not. Frankly, I do not understand why there are different interpretations. It seems to me that the common-sense legislation will explicitly clear any ambiguity in the law and permit the use of these funds to allow communities to build and/or improve tornado shelters.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly support this legislation and thank the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS) for his leadership.

Mr. Chairman, as Chair of the subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to support H.R. 247—the "Tornado Shelters Act," introduced by our colleague, the gentleman from Alabama, Mr. BACHUS.

The legislation would permit the use of CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) funds to construct or enhance tornado shelters in manufactured housing communities or for residents of manufactured housing.

I will shortly turn over the floor to my colleague from Alabama, so that he may manage this bill, but before I do that, I wanted to make a few points.

Mr. Chairman, I do not hail from an area of the country that frequently suffers outbreaks of

tornadoes. While we do have regular bouts of severe weather—especially in the summer months—we are far from "Tornado Alley."

As many of you may know, however, the tornado season started last week and will continue through June.

This is truly a matter of life or death.

In this calendar year 2001, already 10 people have died from tornadoes.

In 2000, there were slightly less than 898 tornadoes resulting in 40 fatalities.

In 1999, there were over 1,300 reported tornadoes resulting in 94 fatalities.

In Camilla, Georgia last year, for example, 12 people died and more than 125 manufactured homes were destroyed after a series of pre-season tornadoes covered a 10-mile path.

I am struck by the words of my colleague from Alabama, the site of far too many of these killer storms. Mr. BACHUS says that in the face of the tornado threat we can do two things—pray and prepare. Pray it won't happen again, and prepare for the next line of twisters.

That's why we are here today—expediting the process of responsible congressional action. While the citizens can pray, their government must help all to prepare. I understand that there are different questions of interpretation on whether this legislation is needed or not. This common-sense legislation will explicitly clarify and permit the use of these funds to allow communities to build or improve tornado shelters in manufactured housing communities.

Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS) be permitted to control the remainder of the time on this bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, the remaining time allocated to the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. ROUKEMA) will be controlled by the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS).

There was no objection.

Mr. FRANK. Mr. Chairman, I yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAFALCE), the ranking member of the Committee on Financial Services, for the first time in the consideration of this bill.

Since there has been no committee deliberations, this is the first opportunity the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAFALCE), the ranking member of the Committee on Financial Services, gets to deliberate on the bill.

Mr. LAFALCE. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK), the ranking minority member of the Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity. The intent of the bill is quite laudable, to make it easier to use CDBG, that is Community Development Block Grant, funds to build tornado and storm shelters for the benefit of manufactured housing residents.

□ 1230

With a few perfecting amendments that we will be offering, the final bill may well become one that the Democrats can support.